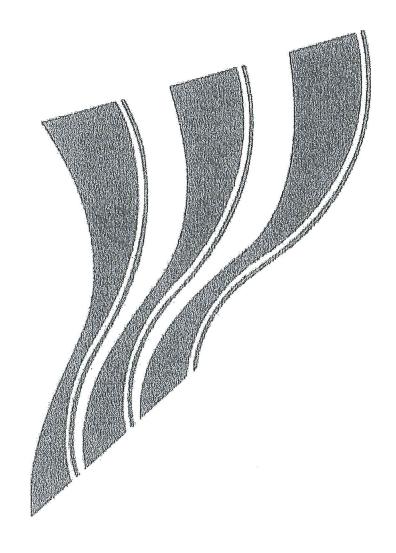


CITY OF WILLMAR, MINNESOTA REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE ACTION

CITY COUNCIL ACTION				
Date:				
☐ Approved ☐ Amended ☐ Other	☐ Denied ☐ Tabled			

	Agenda Item Number: Meeting Date: January 2 Attachments: X Yes	29,2014	Approved Amended Other	☐ Denied ☐ Tabled
Originating Department:	Administration			
Agenda Item: Strategic Planning				
Recommended Action: Continue discussion on a strategic planning process for City Council.				
Background/Summary: Council Member Ahmann is recommending the City engage in a strategic planning process and City Council has indicated that the Labor Relations Committee should continue to discuss a possible process and bring forth a recommended process to Council. Attached are documents from most recent sessions.				
Alternatives: Table the item and discussion until a future date.				
Financial Considerations: Costs will depend on venue, facilitator, etc. but the Council does have funds budgeted under professional services in 2014 that would be sufficient.				
Preparer: C. Stevens		Signature:	lel 4 th	
Comments:				



City of Willmar, Minnesota

Results from Goal Setting Session

City Council and Senior Managers

April 29, 2011

Mission, Legacy and Goals

I. Mission

The City of Willmar is committed to providing responsible municipal service in an open, effective and efficient manner to all citizens of the local and area community. The ultimate goal is to preserve and enhance the quality of life for future generations.

II. Legacy - Framing the Future

The participants were asked to identify what they want their legacy to be from their service with the City. The question was open ended and without constrictions. The following list is summarized from the information submitted.

- Power plant development
- Always did my best to serve the people
- Access road to the north
- Sound development decisions
- Environmentally sound development
- Fair, consistent treatment of all
- Community involvement
- Respected community reputation
- Balance community growth needs
- De-politicized decisions
- Clear direct leadership (not to fear change)
- Community pride
- A safe community
- Cultural diversity
- Parks and recreation (walkways and trails)
- Forward thinking (Not afraid to try new things) (Think out of box)
- Partnering with the private sector (Minn West)
- Partnering with other agencies (county, schools)
- Community Investment program
- Strong city financial position
- Major capital projects (WWTP) (Airport) (Industrial Park) (Library)
- Build a great staff team
- High employment rate (jobs program)
- Community Center
- Street improvement funding plan
- Develop city/county economic development commission
- Bio-fuels and wind turbine
- All American City Award

III. Goals - Leadership, Operations, Infrastructure, Connections and Development

Based on the conversation and discussion a draft of five comprehensive and inclusive goals has been prepared. To help define each goal statement, there is a distinctive and characteristic phrase which summarizes each goal. Each of these five represents an aggregation of topics and themes from the discussion at the meeting.

These five goals are designed to serve as the foundation for the future strategies and priorities of the City. This document is easily tracked, can be modified regularly and is simple in format, design and understanding. The City Council has asked that an update to the goals be provided to them six months after they are adopted.

- I. Leadership: Successful integration of the new City Administrator
- II. Operations: Efficient and effective services
- III. Infrastructure: Efficient investments of transportation, facilities and technology
- IV. Connections: Strong public partnerships and engaged community
- V. Development: Thriving, dynamic regional center

IV. Goals, Strategies, and Tasks

The following is a list of the Goals (items I through V) and the Strategies (items A, B, C, etc.) and sample Tasks (1, 2, 3 as illustrations only). Additional work on the strategies and action steps is a necessary first step for the City Council.

Goal I - Leadership: Successful integration of the new City Administrator

- A. Build trust and teamwork through enhanced unity within the City Council.
- B. When new Administrator is hired, engage in a discussion about roles and responsibilities.
- C. Continue to enhance a culture that values open communication.

Goal II - Operations: Efficient and effective services

- A. Engage in a study of the traditional methods and practices of the City.
 - 1. Request each Department Head to select one topic for further evaluation. Present to the City Council for consideration.
 - 2. Review the structure of city government look for duplication and efficiency opportunities (utilities).

- B. Work with the County, Schools and higher education entities to cooperate, share resources and reduce duplication of services.
- C. Decide on status of audio or videotaping of Council committee meetings.
- D. Prepare a financial strategy in response to possible LGA cuts (local option sales tax).

<u>Goal III – Infrastructure:</u> Efficient investments of transportation, facilities and technology

- A. Develop a long-term sustaining funding source for street reconstruction projects.
 - 1. Examine creative funding sources.
 - 2. Review the assessment policy.
- B. Meet with MnDot on the opening of the Highway 12 by-pass (downtown).
- C. Adopt Storm Water Management Plan (BARR report)
 - 1. Examine how issues are communicated with the public (educate).
- D. Develop a realistic long range capital plan for the City's buildings and facilities.

<u>Goal IV – Connections:</u> Strong public partnerships, engaged community and confidence in city government

- A. Develop creative ideas to connect with the minority communities.
 - 1. Participate in minority community events.
 - 2. Work with School District as entry point of community values.
- B. Develop strong communication channels with state and federal officials.
- C. Develop creative ways to get the public involved in a productive way.
 - 1. Beyond traditional city hall-public historical methods (survey)
 - 2. More effective use of website to share city information
- D. Enhance understanding of Willmar Community Center programs and activities. (aging focus).

Goal V - Development: Thriving, dynamic, regional center

A. Continue to support and fund the Willmar Design Center concepts for downtown.

- B. Continue participation in the City/County Economic Development Commission.
- C. Market the value and strengths offered by the Minn West Technology Campus.
- D. Resolve airport land release issues as soon as possible.
- E. Explore the concept of Willmar's livability (community choices, housing).

WORK SESSION

MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR WORK SESSION

FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2012

I. The meeting convened at 1:00 p.m. in the MinnWest Technology Conference Room.

Present: Mayor Frank Yanish; Council Members Doug Reese, Ron Christianson, Denis Anderson, Steve Ahmann, Tim Johnson, Jim Dokken and Bruce DeBlieck. Council Member Rick Fagerlie was absent.

Also present were City Administrator Charlene Stevens and Administrative Assistant Audrey Peterson. Dave Unmacht with Springsted Incorporated facilitated the work session.

2. Mayor's Perspective

Frank Yanish highlighted the importance and value of the work session and emphasized how important it was for the City Council, Mayor and City Staff to work together for the benefit of the citizens of Willmar. The Mayor concluded his remarks by stating it was his desire that the Council can come together to make hard choices and then move forward.

3. Reflection and Perspective.

City Administrator Stevens reflected on her time with the City and vision for the future. Ms. Stevens expressed her opinion that the timing is right for the organization to reshape itself and to lead as a regional center. Ms. Stevens talked about the changes within the organization needing to be a thoughtful process, the dedicated and talented staff who care about the work they do and the City; and her goal to build a culture that encourages and rewards teamwork and risk taking. Ms. Stevens also cautioned that building an organization of innovation takes trust to create an environment where it is safe to take risks and learn from mistakes.

Facilitator Dave Unmacht informed the group that it was his plan to engage in interactive discussions which will set the stage for the balance of the session. He had contacted each Council Member prior to the Work Session and his impressions were that they were experienced, passionate, uncertain, hopeful, opportunistic and proud.

Mr. Unmacht reviewed goals set at the 2011 Work Session which included: Leadership – hiring and integration of a new City Administrator; Operates – maintain efficient and effective services; Infrastructure – efficient investments in transportation, facilities and technology; Connections – strong public partnerships; and Development – thriving, dynamic regional center.

<u>Work Session Focus and #1 Goal – Leadership:</u> Successful integration of the new City Administrator, three key elements:

- 1. Build trust and teamwork through enhanced unity within the City Council
- 2. Engage in a discussion about roles and responsibilities.
- 3. Enhance a culture that values open communication.

Mr. Unmacht challenged the group to set expectations of the Work Session by practicing good group dynamics and having an open and honest conversation. The Session is designed to be a positive, forward-looking next step.

Conversations with the Council prior to the Work Session:

• We have a lot of tough issues to address

- We need to work together more effectively
- We need to increase our level of citizen engagement
- We need to be open to new ways of doing business
- We are in a rut and need to get out of it
- We need to be open and candid to more forward
- We need to begin succession planning in City Hall
- We must find a new sense of trust between us
- We need to improve our decorum at meetings
- We need to make decisions and move on
- We need to agree to disagree
- We need to be more tolerant of individual opinions
- We need to come to agreement on our roles
- We need to work with staff on their roles

What was not heard in these conversations?

- Unrealistic expectations
- Moving ahead will be easy
- Personal attacks
- Disagreement over the future direction of the City of Willmar
- Unwillingness to address difficulties
- Charlene is not doing the job

City Council expectations from the Work Session:

- High expectations; a willingness to listen
- Look at where the City has been and plan for the future.
- Would like to see roles of the Council and how the roles can be narrowed down, how they can
 work as a team, be aware of their limitations, know guidelines/fault lines and when they are
 crossing the line (micromanaging)
- Where do responsibilities of the Council begin and end
- Ability to get along, agree to disagree, build confident and trust, and how they deal with each other.
- Discussion of changes/opportunities. Changes would include retiring Department Directors and elected officials. Opportunities include the growing minority community, and growth of the City. Growth should be viewed as positive. How to move the City forward; develop a roadmap. Mr. Unmacht asked the group when they thought the next minority would be elected to the Council.
- Diversity and meeting expectations. The Council is in a rut; information is power and the need for it to be in written form. Involve citizens.
- Develop ideas to focus on change in government, City will need to pick up more of these changes.

Quick Hits:

1)	Say the words "City of Willmar" and what is the first thing that comes to you mind_	?

- Outcome, Growth
- Regional Access TV
- Pride, the Council has accomplished a great deal

2) In my tenure on the Council the one item that I am most proud of is
--

- New Waste Water Treatment Plant
- MinnWest Technology Campus

3) The reason I enjoy being on the City Council is ______

- Serving
- Thrill of new ideas
- Differing opinions but get things done.

4) If I could change one aspect of our work on the City Council it would be ______

- Entire Council conduct labor negotiations
- More data with staff requests
- More quantification of data
- · Accurate information, why are we doing things?

Reflecting back: Mr. Unmacht asked the Council if there was a tipping point that has defined the present working relations on the City Council? Will that experience define your tenure on the Council? Can you learn from that experience and move on?

The Council discussed the effects the Westwinds Housing Project had on Council relations and how to learn from the experience.

Next, the discussion moved on to the topic of "Roles."

Mr. Unmacht posed the following question to the City Council and Mayor:

How do you make decisions and what do you spend your time on as an elected official? Is it what you want to be doing?

- Loves the job
- Would like to spend more time being a people person
- Would like to spend more time bringing community together, more public presence and be more visible in the community.
- More time is spent on day to day decision making versus strategic planning
- Need to do more citizen engagement

What is your decision-making structure and how are you organized as a body to process and take action?

- Likes the Committee process (Public Works/Safety, Finance, Labor Relations and Community Development)
- Council spend more time on day-to-day issues and not enough on long-range, future planning
- Too much day to day policy
- Not enough long term planning
- How can we get what we need from staff?

Mr. Unmacht and Ms. Stevens suggested some possible changes to agendas or the formulation of a strategic of future perspective committee to begin looking longer term.

What do you need from City staff, are you getting the information you need to make decisions?

- Needs to know issues ahead of time, change how we spend money.
- What are we doing, what is the cost, is request sustainable?
- Procedures are in place, need to trust.
- Trust, budget process is an example, should not have to revisit for each expense.
- Know roles and responsibilities, trust and respect.
- Trust staff and each other until there's reason to believe otherwise; ask questions.
- Trust, but challenge
- Need to work on trust/accountability. Give example and be specific; open communication, create culture
 of innovation.
- Trust and learn from mistakes, correct and move on.
- City vehicles are a good example of concerns being raised and a new look and a change as a result.
- What are we doing and why are we doing it? Information

Are you a group of nine individuals working together as a team, or nine individuals who are working?

- Working together as a team.
- As a whole, work together.
- Team with a lot of ability, structure can make it hard sometimes.
- Changes with new Mayor and City Administrator.
- Work as a team, all coming from different backgrounds.
- Need to agree on a goal, try to attain.

Mr. Unmacht called for a recess at 2:50 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

The discussion continued with the role of the City Council:

Mr. Unmacht provided the Council with the following:

- Consistent policy direction
- Focus on strategy, vision and the future
- Keep staff on track with the highest priorities
- Keep staff informed and educated on your opinions
- Develop respectful decorum and operating culture
- Interject levity and humor when appropriate
- Stay connected to the community and citizens
- · Let staff know if mistakes are made
- Support and advocate a risk-taking culture
- Ask questions if you don't understand
- Be generous in your expression of thanks and appreciation

The Council was asked if there was anything they would add to the list:

- Work with staff.
- Follow laws and ordinances
- Spokesperson for the community.
- Represent the people who elected them.
- Council sets policy, staff carries it out.
- Be consistent with direction.
- Represent the community.
- Be willing to do things differently.

- Respect that staff does the best they can.
- Give direction to staff and staff provides direction to Council it should be a two-way street.

Changing Relationships...what does it take?

- Understand individual perspectives
- Respect different viewpoints
- Have a common understanding of your role
- Make a commitment
- Individual accountability; group norms
- Talk about it once in a while

One topic that is most important in City government

- City provides good services.
- Provide good services to citizens.
- Treat employees with respect.
- Provide public services at reasonable rates.
- Break down expenditures of the City of Willmar.
- Reputation of the City, Council and Staff; Public Works services.
- Public works; review expenditures and make changes where necessary (vehicles).
- Take care of small concerns of citizens.

Laura Becker, a citizen, was present and asked for her expectations of the Council. Ms. Becker responded that the City Council and Mayor need to listen and respond, give time and give answers to citizen questions and concerns.

The Council also described that they felt were the citizens' expectations of them:

- Citizens' smallest concerns should be the Council's biggest concern.
- Be good stewards of City's money.
- Manage the City's property levy.
- Citizens expect the Council to be a cheerleader for the community and City projects.
- Citizens expect to see Council out and about more in the community at meetings and social events.

What is the reputation of the City Council?

- We will find out in November, everybody has a job and looks out for others.
- Not always positive, media coverage is not always fair.
- Reputation is not bad.
- Reputation is okay; more information provided.
- Role is much more than anticipated at times
- Role is about what was expected.

Consensus building - What roles do each play?

- Look for common goal, compromise.
- Not sure the Mayor should vote to break a tie
- Mayor's role is in the charter and is expected to vote
- Experience don't always understand what is going on in the trenches and what staff is dealing with. Council should rely on staff recommendations, Administrator works with/for the Council. Council sets policy.

- Mayor is the entire city's representative, should have an opinion and vote when necessary.
- Charter states that Mayor should make recommendations.
- What is it and why are we doing it? Ask citizens.

Expectations of the City Administrator

- Be happy and glad; keep a friendly environment.
- What is in the job description, duties, contract.
- Readily accessible, expectations have been met.
- Keep City on track, come up with ideas and run staff efficiently.
- To give the best information at the time, policy changes (to bring forward and recommend).
- Genuine/honest communication, he expects to be in the know, receive facts, wants to know why
- decisions are made.
- Make goals happen, give recommendations, follow vision/priorities of Council.
- Open information, accessibility has been good.
- Council needs to make time to talk to Administrator, but don't burden or interfere with her job, respect chain of command.

Mr. Unmact suggested that if Council isn't feeling they are getting enough information or had questions, they need to take responsibility to Ms. Stevens about what is needed.

Ms. Stevens stated that she does try to use a variety of forms for communications and knows that not everyone uses email for example and that she also tries to work with and respect the committee structure, but welcomes any feedback and tries to be as available as possible for Council Members.

If Council were the City Administrator, what would you want from the Council?

- Be treated as a professional.
- Feedback...How am I doing?
- Trust and respect.
- Professionalism.
- Trust and feedback.
- Truth.
- Trust and respect, make good decisions.
- Trust; open/honest.

What are the expectations of City staff?

- To do a good job and make Council look good.
- Be open to new ideas and change.
- Follow through with day-to-day operations, provide information and alternatives, make recommendations.
- Respect the Council and their decisions, Council is the Board of Directors.

What does Staff expect from Council?

- Spirit of cooperation, team builder, approachable.
- Respect the role, staff implements the majority decision professionally, don't carry a grudge.
- Advice, to be able to keep skills up to date in areas of expertise.
- Expect the unexpected.
- Dignity and respect.

Functional Relationships....what characterizes them?

- Open Dialog
- Professional decorum at meetings
- Relaxed environment
- Mistakes forgiven
- Blurring of roles
- Honest expression
- Risks allowed

What characterizes dysfunction?

- Tension
- Blame
- Hidden agendas
- Gossip rules
- Poor decorum at meetings
- Long memories
- Slow decision-making

Mr. Unmacht emphasized the importance of trust and respect and the need to work on it if it either not there or not where it needs to be.

Future of the City – What are the top five priorities?

Mayor Yanish	1) Old airport land releases
	2) MinnWest Technology Campus, University of MN research program
	3) Do more with airport
	4) Downtown, work with Steering Committee/team
	5) Willmar Municipal Utilities
Council Member Anderson	1) Economic development (MinnWest and Industrial Park)
	2) Regional Center – medical community, growth/opportunity
	3) State government, reduce dependency of local government aid
	4) Redesign/redevelopment Downtown
	5) Integrate Municipal Utilities into City government
Council Member Ahmann_	1) Municipal Utilities – roles, collaboration
	2) Continue to grow Industrial Park
	3) Expansion of Industrial Park
	4) Highway 12, 4-lane highway
	5) Downtown community environment
Council Member Reese	1) Airport land release, Industrial Park development
	2) Diversity, encourage trust
	3) Engage with faith community and develop partnerships
	4) Downtown, make it a retail center
	5) Willmar Municipal Utilities
Council Member Christenson	1) Keep business center atmosphere
	2) Quite zones
	3) Smaller Police Department
	4) Privatization of City services
	5) Encourage young people to live in Willmar, keep property taxes low
Council Member Johnson	1) Economic development, alternative energy, light rail transportation
	2) Storm water issues, flooding
	3) Economic development, MinnWest campus is great example

4) Rice Hospital

5) Maintain medical center status

Council Member Dokken

1) Fix storm water problems

2) Core city housing falling apart

3) Downtown growth

4) Collaborate City services

5) Make City safe place to work and play

Council Member DeBlieck

1) Succession planning – staff retirements

2) Storm water issues and lakes (invasive species/weeds) – take steps

3) Bike/walk paths (anticipate more use with gas prices climbing)

4) Green spaces – obtain Swan Lake area

5) Connection between north/south sides of City (bridge)

City Administrator Stevens:

Build an organization that attracts and maintains best qualified employees in order to accomplish the list above.

Overall Consensus – what we need to do as individuals/team to ensure we move forward successfully on behalf of the citizens?

- Willmar is going to be twice its size by the end of decade, need to make better use of the new airport.
- Plan for Industrial Park growth;
- Prepare for growth
- Lead, follow or get out of the way.
- Agree on goals and find best way to resolve issues, don't be afraid of discussion.
- Agree on goals and all get behind to achieve goals.
- Develop Downtown and find ways to attract people to go there.
- Don't be afraid to act and keep moving forward; spend more time on strategic goals, let staff take care of the day to day operations..

Mr. Unmacht reviewed:

1) Individual Expectations for Council Members:

- Listen and learn
- Offer support
- Build new relationships
- Be a role model
- Build trust with each other and with staff
- Be open-minded
- Be responsible
- Be visible

2) Power of Change - the Future:

- It's really hard work,
- It isn't them or they (but us)
- Search for the diamond in the rough
- Cultures change and people must adapt
- Building trust is more important than ever
- Great opportunity lies ahead

The Council Members and Mayor were also asked for their final thoughts:

• Work together, reach consensus, agree to disagree.

- Still a 4/4 council, need to work on respect, need more information.
- Good to sit down and talk about future plans
- Need to discuss past split decisions
- Cannot dwell on past, but must move forward.
- Concerned that Council has become predictable
- Need to do what is best for the City.
- Work session resulted in good discussions uneasy at times, but good.
- Good to talk, need to talk more and share ideas
- Now is the time to move forward and make improvements
- Change is a process and does not occur overnight

Mayor Yanish expressed his appreciation to Dave Unmacht, the Council and the City Administrator stating that everyone should take something meaningful back and consider how we can change the way we are working . The Mayor stated that by Council and staff working together the City of Willmar will prosper and grow.

Mr. Unmacht told the Mayor and Council to enjoy what they are doing and have fun.

The Work Session adjourned at 5:15 p.m.